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SUBJECT: GHANA: DECEMBER VOTE ON DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS

REF: STATE 122629

¶1. (SBU) POL Chief met December 2 with MFA Deputy Director for Multilateral Affairs Betty Osafo Mensah, to deliver reftel points and urge Ghana to vote against the impending OIC-sponsored Defamation of Religions resolution in next week's UNGA plenary session. POL Chief noted Ghana's abstention in the Third Committee vote on the Defamation resolution on November 12, and stressed the threat that the defamation concept poses to minority groups and to freedom of speech. We also provided a copy of the Defamation Resolution fact sheet, calling attention to cases in which individuals had been punished and persecuted for blasphemy (including Ahmadiyyas - an important component of Ghana's Muslim community).

¶2. (SBU) Mensah said that a decision on whether Ghana would switch from abstaining to opposing the resolution would be made at "a higher level," and noted that the GOG received a letter from members of the U.S. Congress, also urging the GOG to oppose the resolution. She said that the letter had been forwarded to the President's office, but did not indicate whether Ghana is likely to reconsider its position.
TEITELBAUM